## Stereotypes & Agency

## Agency

#### The term refers to:

the capacity of social agents to make choices and act within the system constraints.

#### The term is used as:

an alternative to 'freedom' and 'liberty' which imply that social subjects can escape power structures and dominant ideologies.



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## Stereotypes

### **Psychology & Cognitive sciences**

**Broad definition:** Pictures in our head that condense, schematize and simplify our conception of the world. (Lippmann, 1922)

Narrow definition: Conventional ideas of people who belong to certain groups (race, nation, profession, class, gender, etc.). (Schweinitz, 2011 and Perkins, 1979)

## Media Stereotypes

Film studies, litterature & art

**Broad definition:** Recurrent patterns of narration, plot structure, acting, visual style, music, etc. (Schweinitz, 2011)

**Narrow definition:** Types of characters that are defined by a limited set of characteristics and do not evolve throughout the story (Dyer, 1993)

## Stereotypes

#### **PROS**

- Facilitate cognition and communication (cognitive relief)
- Reduce the buzzing confusion of the world (simplification)
- Build consensus among communities
- Create and maintain the group identities

#### **CONS**

- Standardize our perceptions of groups and people
- Stabilize what is changing
- Erase nuances and differences
- Lead to judgements and intolerance
- Replace critical thinking
- Align our beliefs with dominant ideologies

## Media Stereotypes

#### **PROS**

- Help the audience to make sense of media content and understand the story
- Increase chances to make profit with a production

#### **CONS**

- Standardize productions into ready-made formulae
- Homogenize culture
- Make viewers more intelorant towards innovation

## Naturalization of stereotypes

### Repetition

Conservation zone

(potential of denaturalization)

Equilibrium zone

(potential of naturalization)

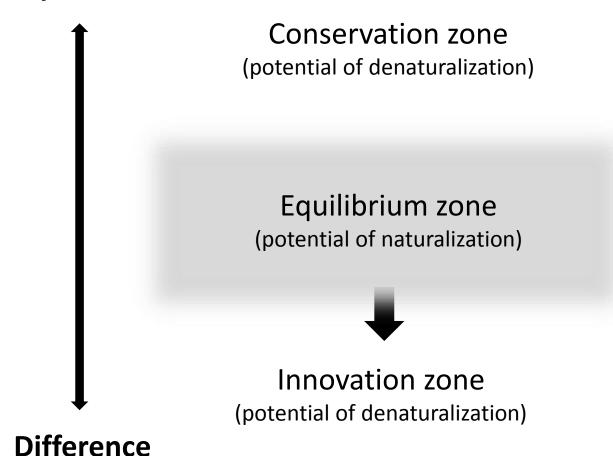
Innovation zone

(potential of denaturalization)

**Difference** 

# Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #1

### Repetition



# Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #2

#### Repetition

Conservation zone (potential of denaturalization)



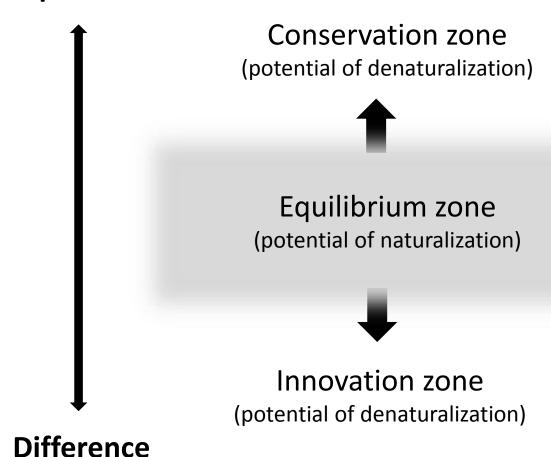
Equilibrium zone (potential of naturalization)

Innovation zone (potential of denaturalization)

**Difference** 

# Denaturalization of stereotypes strategy #3

#### Repetition



## References

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